

EHCWA REFERRER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

The Eye Health Centre of Western Australia ('EHCWA') has developed these terms and conditions to ensure effective patient care and transparency of professional roles and responsibilities for the patient, referrer, and EHCWA. Moreover, EHCWA is committed to supporting referring practitioners as an integral part of our clinical services.

1.2. Scope of Practice

EHCWA, operated by UWA Optometry, is a teaching clinic for the Doctor of Optometry students. It provides comprehensive primary care services for the general public and referral services for specialty optometric care. The specialty services represent the scope of optometric subspecialty practice including ocular pathology assessment/management, children's vision, specialty contact lenses, myopia management, dry eye assessment and management, and low vision care. The specialty services are led by UWA academic clinicians with students assisting in diagnostic imaging and some clinical tests. EHCWA will ensure that the expertise and skills required to perform the services are suitable and data is collected according to evidence-based protocols. In all cases, communication with the referring practitioner will be our key focal point. EHCWA does not dispense optical aids such as spectacles and contact lenses unless they form a part of the patient's treatment plan e.g., scleral lens for keratoconus.

EHCWA's specialty services are:

- i. **Ocular pathology service** involves diagnostic imaging and visual function assessment that provides an in-depth analysis related to a suspected underlying condition, which may involve consultation with EHCWA's consultant ophthalmologists. Clinical results and management plans are subsequently communicated with the referrer via an EHCWA report. EHCWA will discuss the clinical results with the patient and provide appropriate optometric management for the referred condition which may involve continued observation at EHCWA and/or onward referral to an ophthalmologist. However, if the referrer elects to manage the patient themselves or participate in a co-management option with EHCWA, please indicate their level of involvement in the referral.
- ii. **Dry eyes assessment and management** offers evaluation and evidence-based management of dry eye diseases using state-of-the-art equipment. Results are discussed with the patient, and treatment is initiated by EHCWA and communicated with the referrer. Should the patient wish not to undergo treatment at EHCWA, the referring practitioner will be notified. The patient will be advised to return to the referring practitioner or community optometrist for other primary care needs such as refractive care and posterior eye assessment.
- iii. **Myopia management** is intended for patients who are myopic or at risk of developing myopia. Treatment options to manage myopia progression will be offered to the patient which may involve dispensing specialty spectacles, contact lenses and/or eye drops. Results are discussed with the patient, and the treatment plan is communicated with the referrer via an EHCWA report. If specialty spectacles are required, a prescription will be provided to the patient and the patient will be referred back to the referrer for dispensing. If myopia-control contact lenses and/or eye drops are required, treatment is initiated in EHCWA.
- iv. **Children's vision assessment and management.** EHCWA offers comprehensive vision and eye health assessments for infants, young children, and primary school-aged children. Results are discussed with the patient and parent(s) and/or guardian. Management plans are communicated with the referrer via an EHCWA report. Should the patients require spectacles, they will be referred back to the referring practitioner's practice for dispensing. If the patient is not referred by an optometrist, they can take the prescription to a community optometrist of their choice. EHCWA will not recommend a vendor for dispensing spectacles.
- v. **Specialty contact lens** service is for patients requiring complex contact lens care for eye conditions such as keratoconus, corneal graft, post-refractive surgery, and pellucid marginal degeneration. Results are discussed with the patient, and the management plan will be communicated with the referrer. EHCWA will provide initial fitting, aftercare, dispensing, and ongoing review of the contact lenses. The patient will be advised to return to the referring practitioner or community optometrist for other primary care needs such as posterior eye assessment.
- vi. **Low vision.** In partnership with low vision service providers and support organisations, EHCWA offers visual status assessment services as part of integrated care delivery for vision rehabilitation services.
- vii. **Test only.** EHCWA offers a test-only option for referrers that require access to a particular clinical device to support patient care. A list of instruments can be found on the EHCWA website. The referrer must specify the instrument, measurement and/or specific report output, e.g. OCT retinal nerve fibre OU analysis. EHCWA does not discuss the results with the patient but advises them to consult with the referrer. The test result with

interpretations will be communicated with the referrer via the EHCWA report. Patient management remains with the referring practitioner.

A summary table outlining the services is provided below.

Specialty Clinics	Ocular pathology	Dry eye	Myopia Management	Children's Vision	Specialty Contact Lens	Low Vision	Test Only
EHCWA generates a report to communicate the clinical findings with the referrer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EHCWA discusses the results with the patient	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
EHCWA instigates management plans	Optional	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
EHCWA refers patients back to the referring practitioner for spectacle dispensing if needed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A

1.3. EHCWA Standard Procedures

- i. All tests conducted at EHCWA are routine clinical tests and do not involve experimental procedures.
- ii. For clinical services, EHCWA will not accept referrals from optometrists or other health professionals for patients currently under ophthalmological care unless it is for a different condition, or the optometrist has already consulted with the treating ophthalmologist.
- iii. If the referrer wishes to refer a patient currently under ophthalmological care to EHCWA for teaching and student learning only and has obtained the patient's consent, the patient may be seen in EHCWA's primary care teaching clinic. EHCWA does not participate in the care of the patient.
- iv. EHCWA services are provided at no charge to the referrer.
- v. There is no out-of-pocket cost for patients referred to the ocular pathology assessment and low vision services.
- vi. There may be out-of-pocket costs for patients referred to other specialty services such as myopia management. Fees may apply for treatment interventions in selected services such as intense pulsed light for dry eyes, orthokeratology fitting for myopia management.
- vii. All patients will be managed according to strict EHCWA protocols, which take into consideration professional guidelines by regulatory bodies such as the Optometry Board of Australia, National Health and Medical Research Council, Optometry Australia and RANZCO.
- viii. Optometry students may participate in patient consultation in compliance with EHCWA protocols under the supervision of a UWA Academic.
- ix. EHCWA reserves the right to refuse referrals from a practitioner if they are found to be in breach of the terms and conditions laid out in this document or for conditions not suitable for EHCWA services.
- x. EHCWA follows the University of Western Australia (UWA) policies and procedures relating to research and publication.

1.4. Patient Management

- i. EHCWA should not be regarded as a referral service for urgent conditions. On the rare occasion that the condition requires urgent treatment, an appropriate action plan will be formulated in consultation with the referring practitioner.
- ii. EHCWA may request an opinion from a consultant ophthalmologist engaged through Lions Eye Institute if required.

2. REFERRING

2.1. Referral Process

- i. Referring practitioners must ensure the referral letter contains sufficient details to avoid a delay in processing. All patients referred by optometrists must be accompanied by a referral letter.
- ii. Referring practitioners can refer to EHCWA by secure email and Oculo.
- iii. Referring practitioners must advise the patient on why the patient is being referred to EHCWA.
- iv. EHCWA may need to contact the referring practitioner for further information about the patient and/or specific services required.

2.2. Patient Management

- i. EHCWA should be regarded as a partner in the management of patients not the replacement of their primary eyecare practitioners.
- ii. EHCWA will bill Medicare as appropriate.
- iii. If the patient is referred for educational purposes only (e.g. patient is already under the care of an ophthalmologist but would like to contribute to teaching by attending a visit in EHCWA), Medicare will not be billed.
- iv. Fees may apply when services are not covered by Medicare.
- v. Referring practitioners must ensure that timely treatment of ocular conditions is not adversely delayed by referral to EHCWA.

2.3. Exceptional Cases

- i. If symptoms or ocular findings unrelated to the original referral are noted at the time of EHCWA consultation, the referring practitioner will be informed, and it is then their responsibility to manage the patient appropriately.
- ii. If an urgent situation arises and the referring practitioner cannot be contacted, EHCWA reserves the right to initiate a management plan.

2.4. Contact with EHCWA

- i. Referring practitioners are encouraged to contact EHCWA regarding its services, including seeking clarification about a specific patient report.

2.5. Copyright

- i. Images distributed in the patient reports are the copyright of EHCWA.
- ii. Distribution or reproduction of part or all these images in any form is prohibited, except for referral to another healthcare practitioner and/or where prior approval has been given by EHCWA.
- iii. EHCWA must be acknowledged as the source of the images.